

## IMPORTANT TRAINING DATES

- Pre-Deployment Briefing to Single Soldiers & Dual Mil  
- October 19, 1300  
- Phantom Warrior Center
- Pre Deployment Briefing to Spouses  
- October 19, 1800  
- Phantom Warrior Center
- Opportunity Leave  
5-14 November  
- See pg 5 for details!
- Election Day  
- 9 November
- Veterans Day Trng Holiday  
- 11 November

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# Griffon Herald

*"The voice of your soldier as they get ready to deploy!"*

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3

OCTOBER 15, 2005



## Preparing for Deployment

Lieutenant Colonel Joe Gandara

As you all are probably aware, we are getting close to that day when we ask you to bid farewell to your soldiers and move off onto the mission our country has asked us to perform. Let me be the first to say how proud I am of all your soldiers and the sacrifices that they make in this calling that has been my profession for the last 19 years. More importantly, let me also acknowledge those that are left behind as well, and your sacrifices that you make past, current and future. While separation is never easy, the calling and sacrifice every soldier and family member makes does not go forgotten.

The average Private to Specialist in the Army today has joined the service after September 11, 2001, and so understands what they can expect for the future with respect to deployments. That can not be said for their family members.

To try and close the physical gap between Iraq and the US, we have established Family Readiness Groups (FRG's) in each of the Companies. These are headed by a volunteer from the Company they are a family member of. If you have not been able to contact these great Americans, I encourage you to do so, as soon as possible, as they will have the most current information and are the first and last stop for 'rumor control'. They also have the Company Commanders and my personal confidence with as much information as we can give. Their contact information is in the back of this newsletter, so please let them know if you have any issues or concerns with your soldier, and hopefully you will find that they are really just part of a support system to help the ENTIRE unit. Better yet, you might also find a

way to help too.

We are also establishing a couple of automated systems to allow you to find out what we are doing in Iraq. I will continue to publish this newsletter on a somewhat more frequent basis to let you know what we are up to. We also have the 'Virtual FRG' that I would encourage you all to become a part of. You will be able to get this newsletter electronically as well as get pictures that only you can have access to. The FRG leader and my Rear Detachment Commander also will be putting other key information, like who is coming back on Environmental Leave, and other key events in the unit. If you have internet access, register now at:

<http://www.armyfrg.org/4STB>

See also the article on Company P in this Edition! (pg 5)

## CSM Walker's, Griffon 7, Third Foxhole Edition

Command Sergeant Major Anthony Walker

As our time grows short in our stateside place of duty, and we lean forward in our foxhole and look through our sites down range, we must take a moment to look back. The soldiers of the 4 STB, 4 BCT, 4 ID(M), have just completed their portion of the Brigade MRE (Mission Ready Exercise), and for some of us old timers, we may call it an EDRE w/

ARTEP (Evaluation, Deployment, Readiness, Exercise, with a 72 – 96 hour Army, Training, Evaluation Program. With an outside group looking at us, into us and over our shoulder, we did stand tall and came out much better than we went in. Our evaluators stated that we did better than anticipated.

Although, we still have some train-

ing left to do as we prepare to leave our homes and our comfort zone, I feel we are ready for the task at hand. This will even include the changes that will or may come. We now start to pack up and get not only the soldier ready to fly, but also the equipment we will be taking. This in turn means the days will be long even for the month of October. Weekends may now be

## Griffon 7, Third Foxhole Edition (Con't)



**MP's conduct training searches in preparation for handling Iraqi detainees upon deployment.**

Shortened to keep the focus and the eyes locked on target, which is mission completion when all are ready to go.

There will still be time for family but we will need to make each minute count, for the memories as we prepare to deploy. When your soldier is off or comes home, do joint planning,

for they will also need "Me" time as well as "Us" time.

Griffin 7, Out

## Headquarters and Headquarters Company

CPT Hollar, HHC Commander



**SPC Hotelin gets ready to engage targets with the M2 .50 Cal Machine Gun during a Live Fire.**

The Military Police Platoon was primarily in charge of running detainee operations for the Brigade Mission Readiness Exercise. They were in charge of running the whole facility starting with inspecting the paperwork as soon as the detainees arrive. The paperwork includes 2 sworn statements describing the situation, the evidence custody report which logs all of the evidence, a capture tag with administrative information on the detainee, a medical

screening form, and a Coalition Apprehension Form which describes the crime. The paperwork is imperative because it allows us to build a case against the detainee for the crime committed. Once all of the paperwork is complete and the evidence is collected and signed for the detainee comes into the facility to be searched. Anything that is taken from the detainee is then logged as evidence. The detainee is then walked through the BATS

(Biometric Automated Tracking System). We scanned the detainees retinas, fingerprints, and take profile, front, and full body photos. The detainee is then screened by the medic on site and sent to his cell. The Tactical Human Intelligence Teams then review the paperwork and the evidence and interrogate the detainee. From there the MP's ensure that the detainee has all of his/her basic necessities until release, or movement to a different cell.

## Bravo Bandits Meet The Challenge

2LT Jeffrey R. Blacksher, Headquarters Platoon Leader



**B Company's SFC Young gives his Platoon instruction prior to conducting a Convoy Live Fire.**

To the friends and families of the Griffin Battalion, I am a proud new member of Bravo Company and would just like to say we have been hard at work and have done an outstanding job in the short time I have been here. We have put in a lot of long hours and effort in support of the current Army's initiative, to combat terror and promote global stability. Thank you for supporting us. Without your help, our company's mission would not be accomplished.

We have been extremely busy with preparation and training for our upcoming deployment and I can say with confidence, we are ready to meet the challenge. Recently, the company has been focused on individual and collective training. This has included company lanes, convoy live-fire, driver's training, weapons

ranges, signal and communication specific classes and a Brigade Task force Lanes Exercise. This training has been very carefully planned and is realistic to the communication and tactical demands overseas.

Probably, our most significant signal accomplishment has been the fielding of our new deployable communications package the Joint Node Network (JNN). It is the latest deployable communications package and it is revolutionizing how the Army communicates in the field and in areas of the world where there is little or no communications infrastructure. JNN through the use of satellites and radio antenna relay equipment is capable of supporting voice, data and long-haul communications. This new asset assists the Army in its venture in joint interoperability with our other sister services and other government agen-

cies. In September, we were able to take all of our equipment out, set it up and ensure connectivity with other units within the confines of the post. This realistic Brigade Task Force Lanes Exercise tested our communications planning, structure, military tactics and signal employment. Overall, it was a great success. I am pleased with how the Bandits were able to jump right in and get this system up and running. All of our hard work and training has really paid off during our field exercise. As a result, Bravo Company was recognized as the top company in the 4<sup>th</sup> Special Troops Battalion for Task Force Lanes. The future of our company is a bright but a busy one. We have to load our equipment for shipment and complete some final training in order to prepare for Iraq. Prepared and ready! "Bandits!!!"

# Alpha Company Update

Captain Michael Sapp



Many have probably heard most of the “war” stories by now, resulting from our three weeks deployed for the Brigade Mission Readiness Exercise (MRX). (And if you haven’t heard any stories, yet, you may need to prod your spouse, child, parent, or friend, because I know they have one or two to tell.) For the Brigade, this exercise was a chance to prove to the Division that we are readily trained and equipped to go to Iraq. For Alpha Company “Prophets”, this exercise was a bit more. It was the first opportunity the new Commander, CPT Michael Sapp, had to see the company in action, and, more importantly, it was the first real opportunity for the teams of A Company to prove their worth as Military Intelligence (MI) Systems to the rest of the Battalions in 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade.

Although 4<sup>th</sup> Special Troops Battalion did not go out to the field until September 13<sup>th</sup>, a portion of our Company was in the field working with the Brigade Headquarters as early as September 7<sup>th</sup>. 1LT Derek Mehrrens was putting in countless hours with the Brigade S2 (Intelligence) Section as the Collection Manager, responsible for assigning targets and guidance to the MI Assets moving around the battlefield, while his platoon sergeant, SFC Juan Santiago, oversaw the set-up of the Platoon Operations Center/Prophet Control Station, the station that coordinates and analyzes the intelligence from the Prophet Teams. Meanwhile, SSG Jason Bonds took his platoon to the Brigade HQ not only to set up the Trojan Spirit Satellite-Lite Network (TS-L) and Common Ground Station (CGS), but to begin work as the Current Operations team for the Brigade S2; SSG Bonds’ Soldiers monitor and maintain their own systems and simultaneously scrutinize enemy reports from ongoing battles.

The last few elements of the Company to join the pre-13<sup>th</sup> exodus consisted of two Prophet teams and one of our THTs (Tactical Human-Intelligence Teams). These teams had the unique responsibility of being the first teams attached to, and supporting, a maneuver battalion, moving out with 8-10 Cavalry Squadron. Later, for the third rotation in the exercise, one Prophet Team and one THT changed out to share the “roughing-it” experience of life with the maneuver battalions. Two of our team leaders, SGT Sarah Le Mire and CPL Jeremiah Smith, even had the distinct honor of being recognized by our evaluators from Fort Polk, LA, as two of the Battalion’s three Heroes of the Battlefield for their support of 8-10 Cav and 3-67 Armor.

During the nearly three weeks, the Soldiers of A Company learned many lessons in working with the brigade staff, the maneuver battalions, and even with each other. All-in-all, I’m very proud to say that every team/platoon rose to the challenge and proved not only to themselves, but to the Battalion/Squadron and Brigade Commanders, what a valuable combat multiplier they could be (remembering, that until the recent modularity changes, these Soldiers were Division’s MI collectors). From the analysts/THTs that were collecting around the towns to the detainee interrogators that were tied to the operations base, all of the “Prophet” Soldiers played a crucial role leading to the ultimate victory of 4BCT forces and the capture of CPT Scimitar, the MRX “Ace of Spades”.

Although the Battalion’s focus the last month has been on the Brigade MRX, we must not fail to acknowledge the hard work and long hours our Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Platoon

has been putting in at the Cold Springs Training Area while attached to the Aviation Brigade. Under 2LT Eric Adkins and SFC Michael Heacox, the UAV Platoon has gone from an idea to a fully functioning platoon in under 90 days. A Company is happy to welcome them all back as of October 7<sup>th</sup>, and ready to see what they can do!

Lastly, we all want to send out our warmest wishes to PFC Tiffany Dixon, who gave birth to a beautiful, healthy baby girl, Heaven, on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2005. Congratulations!!!



A Co’s CPL Poss (left) and SGT Pekovic (center) receive instruction on firing the M9 9mm pistol from HHC’s SGT Santiago-Colon (right)



HHC’s SFC Switzer and SGT Casner supervise as PFC Tsung and PFC Williams fire the M240B 7.62mm Machine Gun during a Live Fire.



## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



Blessings to all. This is the 4th Special Troops Battalion Chaplain, and I wanted to introduce myself to all of the most important people to whom I serve. I am a native of West Tennessee where I completed my Bachelors of Science in Marketing from the University of Tennessee at Martin in 1988. In 2004 I graduated from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth Texas with a Master in Divinity. Now I want to transition to my military service. I have served part time and full time in the military as a Military Police (95B), Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical warfare specialist (54B), a Military truck driver (88M), and Recruiter (79T). I have served two tours in combat, one as an Sergeant as an Military Police during Desert Shield/Storm, and last year as a Battalion Chaplain in Iraq until March 2005. As I returned to the US, I saw a need to get more ministry experience to aid soldiers. In June 2005, I was certified in Combat Medical Ministry at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. I love ministry to soldiers.

I want to share my Divine calling to ministry. In the book of Revelation 12:11 "And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony..." The first twenty one years of my life was un-Churched. As I attended Army Basic Training, I was assigned a battle buddy. He was a Christian who shared his faith over the sixteen weeks of training. He never imposed his beliefs, but attracted me to his faith by being secure, hard working, helpful, and unconditionally accepting of all people. Later that year in 1984 the Lord Jesus Christ called me to salvation by repentance and faith in Him as my Lord and savior. In 1988 the Lord called me to part time ministry where I have served in various churches in various capacities. In July 2001 the Lord called me to Military Chaplain Ministry. I was in Recruiting and had to sell my house and get financially prepared for not working for two years. I resigned 31 May 2002 to go to seminary. I was so focused at getting through seminary due to an age restriction to return to active duty, and thereby had to complete a three year program in two years. By God's grace I made it. As I look back in my life I can see God's sovereign hand at work. He saved me during Basic Training, He sent me to war as a Military Police, He sent me to war as a Chaplain, and I am looking forward for His future assignments to serve Him and the people of the US Military.

Let us move on to the focus in the next news letter. My next article will focus upon how to manage long distance relationships. I have currently ordered three very reliable sources and will digest the material, in-order to simplify it in the next edition. I want all to know that I keep this Battalion in my prayers, and love serving the soldiers, their families, and the command. I do this for the honor and glory to God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the blessed Holy Spirit, blessings to all, Amen.

Chaplain Tony Sanders

## Opportunity Leave—What is it??

Lieutenant Colonel Joe Gandara

As most of you are aware, the training the Battalion went through recently did NOT include a trip to the National Training Center (NTC) in Fort Irwin California. This was a decision that was made based on a very short deployment window, in which we could not afford the additional 2 weeks to pack our vehicles and equipment up and ship it to NTC and back. We therefore underwent a Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRE) here at Fort Hood, which allowed us to keep those 2 weeks open for other training opportunities.

The 2 week savings in time has afforded us the "opportunity" to give some of the soldiers of the Battalion time off to see families and relatives before we depart for Iraq in December.

To clarify who gets the opportunity to take this leave, I wanted to give you some of the standing guidelines for approval.

### Opportunity Leave -

- Is normal 'chargeable' leave
- Is NOT 'block' leave, so some will not get to take it
- Will be considered on a case-by-case basis
- Will only be granted if the soldier has completed all pre deployment requirements, such as dental exam, qualification with personal weapon, wills and powers of attorney, and completed all the pre deployment training required by the 4 ID.
- Will be the last opportunity for leave prior to the Thanksgiving weekend training holiday and until Environmental Morale Leave starts in March, 2006.
- Will NOT be offered to soldiers who are 'Mission Essential' to get the unit deployed.

While I would love to get all the soldiers on leave for this time, it is not possible, and so we will attempt to get everyone who can, be allowed to go on leave.



## Company P (for Parents)

The battalion has three companies in it: HHC, Alpha, and Bravo. We'd like to add a fourth company to our Family Readiness group: Company P for our parents. This would be a network of parents passing information to other parents of soldiers in our battalion. Let us know if you would like to be part of this information network. There will be two levels of involvement. Most parents will simply receive

information. The second level is of Key Callers. When there is information to pass, a Family Readiness Group Representative will contact the key callers, who will then call or email up to 10 other families and pass the information on. We will do our best to set up these phone trees by geographic region.

If you would like to be part of "Company P" as a member who receives information

or as a Key Caller, send a letter or email with your name, address, phone number, email address, and your soldier's name to:

Nita Gandara

1107 Nola Ruth Blvd.

Harker Heights, TX 76548

Email: [myris@generalissue.com](mailto:myris@generalissue.com)

## Virtual Family Readiness Group [vFRG]

A Family Readiness Group is designed to pass information on to families of soldiers and to refer those families to resources they may need. In order to help achieve these goals, we are now part of the Virtual FRG system (vFRG).

### Who can use the vFRG?

Soldiers, family members, friends, and interested persons of a soldier in the battalion are eligible to sign up for the vFRG. New users will indicate their "soldier of interest" and will be sponsored by that soldier.

### What is on the vFRG?

Right now, not a lot. But as our soldiers deploy, more will go up. Currently, each company has a page with contact information for the FRG leaders and a list of upcoming events. In the "Downloads" section, the previous battalion newsletters are available.

In the future, we will have pictures of our soldiers and families; maps; calendars; discussion forums; rumor control, etc. This is one way the battalion will be able to stay in touch with our families back home.

### How do I join the vFRG?

Go to: <http://www.armyfrg.org/4stb>

Under the top banner, click on "Registration".

On the new page, click on "Click here to register now"

Fill out your information and click "Continue".

Verify your information and click "Register".

This registers you in the vFRG system.

Now at the top of this page:

Click on "Subscribe to this FRG".

Click "Add new" ("Add yourself" is for soldiers).

Enter your soldier's first name, last name, and the last four of their social security number.

Click "Add soldier".

On the new page, click "Continue" unless you have another soldier of interest.

You will be taken to an AKO and DEERS verification page. This step is optional and will only be used by a soldier's dependents. You can just click "Continue" at the bottom of the page.

Now you wait for your application to be approved. Once you are, enjoy the site and send us suggestions for improvements!

### Family Readiness Leaders

#### Contact Information

#### **HHC**

Trish Mulhall

Phone: 254-542-0088

E-mail:

[patricia.a.mulhall@us.army.mil](mailto:patricia.a.mulhall@us.army.mil)

OR

Daveen Moore

Phone: 254-634-6970

E-mail: [daveen.p.moore@us.army.mil](mailto:daveen.p.moore@us.army.mil)

#### **A Company**

Heather Sapp

Phone: 254-699-7334

E-mail: [heather.sapp@us.army.mil](mailto:heather.sapp@us.army.mil)

OR

Brenna Bonds

Phone: 254-338-0965

E-mail: [armybonds@msn.com](mailto:armybonds@msn.com)

OR

Brandy Lunger

Phone: 254-539-3062

[Brandi1119@yahoo.com](mailto:Brandi1119@yahoo.com)

#### **B Company**

Tonya Duran

Phone: 254-539-9692

E-mail: [BCO4STB@yahoo.com](mailto:BCO4STB@yahoo.com)

### Bn Contact Information

#### Our Mailing address

4th STB, 4th BCT, 4th ID

Bldg 10010

Ft. Hood, Tx 76544

Official Newsletter  
of the 4th Special Troops Battalion



"THE GRIFF"

# CONGRATULATIONS!

*We recognize and congratulate the following promotions:*

To Sergeant First Class:

Vernon Gillette, HHC

To Staff Sergeant:

John Costanzo, B Co

Dustin Hisel, A Co

Simon Lopez, HHC

Christopher Santiago-Colon, HHC

To Sergeant:

Chris Bickers, HHC

Brian Fedak, A Co

Mica Grover, A Co

Anne Hiles, HHC

Thomas Rodgers, HHC

Christopher Smith, HHC

To Specialist:

Christie Horn, B Co

Joseph Ink, HHC

Brandon Pierce, HHC

Scott Thompson, HHC

Melissa Webb, HHC

Brandon Yost, B Co

To Private First Class:

Brandon Bordwine, HHC

Jacob Chrzan, A Co

Nicole Cole, HHC

Tanya Coleman, HHC

Christopher Kuskreidler, HHC

Peter Longoria, HHC

Brian Mace, HHC

Joshua Martin, B Co

Ryland Morigeau, A Co

Brad Sheets, HHC

Philip Soloninka, HHC

Joshua Twiss, HHC

Alvino Williams, HHC

**\*\*\*NEW LINK\*\*\* You can also get this newsletter on the Web at**  
**<http://www.hood.army.mil/4ID> then click on UNITS, then on 4th Brigade, then 4 STB**  
**Then click on the words "Family Readiness"**

Special Recognition to:  
**CPT Nick Long**, HQ Co, AND  
**1SG Glen Krise**, A Co,  
Awarded The Combat Action Badge



**LTC Gandara and CSM Walker award the first Combat Action Badge in the Battalion's history to CPT Nick Long (left) and 1SG Glen Krise (right) for their service during Operation Iraqi Freedom I.**



In keeping with the spirit of the Warrior Ethos, the Combat Action Badge provides special recognition to Soldiers who personally engage the enemy, or are engaged by the enemy during combat operations. The bayonet and grenade are associated with active combat. The oak wreath symbolizes strength and loyalty.

